

17 March 1950

5D-10

The Honorable
James E. Webb
Under Secretary of State
Washington, D. C.

My dear Mr. Webb:

For some time past this Agency has been studying its long-term communications requirements with a view toward re-evaluating its needs in terms of probable future world conditions. One of the major factors emphasized by this study is that the presently utilized communications system depends to a large extent upon military and commercial facilities, much of which would be unavailable to this organization at the onset of hostilities. In order to remedy this situation and to insure an uninterrupted flow of traffic during emergency periods, communications support which can function independently of military and commercial facilities is required.

In all likelihood the Department, too, has found this situation to be a limiting factor in times of stress when communications are most urgently required. Commercial facilities in foreign nations are in many cases subject to governmental control and in any event are frequently unreliable in times of civil disturbance. A satisfactory solution to this problem is present in those Department of State installations in the Middle East and Latin America where this Agency operates radio stations. While the areas served are, in comparison to world-wide requirements, relatively small, it has been found possible to maintain a continuous flow of traffic under adverse circumstances. I am convinced that the successful operation of these circuits has validated the principle under which they were established in conjunction with the Department. It would seem then that an extension of this principle to include posts in areas of the world not presently assured of adequate and reliable radio facilities is worthy of the most serious consideration. Based on the experience gained during the past several years in the Middle East and in Latin America, it would seem that the Department and this Agency would enjoy a mutual benefit if such an extension were to be jointly agreed upon.

That the necessity for additional communications channels is recognized by the Department's representatives in at least one area of the world is exemplified by [redacted] No. 60 of 2 March 1950, although the additional facilities proposed in that telegram would apparently be utilized only in case of extreme emergency and prior thereto would be maintained [redacted]. It is believed that the request for this type of local arrangement demonstrates the need for a coordinated world-wide system of radio communications.

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State Dept. review completed

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The installation of radio facilities in other parts of the world would assure reliable communications when the need is greatest, and the strategic value of such facilities would undoubtedly be enhanced by the economies that would result from a world-wide network of this nature. In conjunction with this, I am sure you will agree that in addition to economy, efficiency and security would also be gained.

In light of present disturbed world conditions and considering the time necessary to create the facilities mentioned herein, I suggest that discussions be undertaken at your earliest convenience with a view toward determining means by which [] facilities can be augmented. I will welcome an opportunity to discuss this with you, or at your request will make available members of my staff for conversations with your interested officials.

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Sincerely yours,

SIGNED

R. H. HILLENKOTTER
Rear Admiral, USN
Director of Central
Intelligence

cc: DCI
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